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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Paul McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Lawrence Anthony Franklin, age 58, of Kearneysville, WV; Steven J. Rosen, age 63, of Silver Spring, MD; and Keith Weissman, age 53, of Bethesda, MD, were indicted today by a federal grand jury sitting in Alexandria with Conspiracy to Communicate National Defense Information to Persons Not Entitled to Receive It. The indictment alleges that beginning in April of 1999, Rosen, the Director of Foreign Policy Issues for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in Washington, D.C., and Weissman, the Senior Middle East Analyst in the Foreign Policy Issues Department at AIPAC, in an effort to influence persons within and outside the United States government, would use their contacts within the United States government, including Franklin, with whom they first met in February 2003, to gather sensitive United States government information, including classified information relating to the national defense, for subsequent unlawful communication, delivery and transmission to persons not entitled to receive it, including members of the media and foreign government officials.

Franklin was also charged with three counts of Communication of National Defense Information to Persons Not Entitled to Receive It. In one of those counts, Rosen was charged with aiding and abetting him in the unlawful disclosure.

Finally, Franklin was charged with conspiring with persons known and unknown to the grand jury to communicate classified information to an agent or representative of a foreign government. It is alleged that Franklin would use his position as a desk officer in the Office of the Secretary of Defense to gather information, classified as affecting the security of the United States, for subsequent unlawful communication to a foreign official.

Mr. McNulty stated: "When it comes to classified information, there is a clear line in the law. Today's charges are about crossing that line. Those entrusted with safeguarding our nation's secrets must remain faithful to that trust. Those not authorized to receive classified information must resist the temptation to acquire it, no matter what their motivation may be."

This case was investigated by the FBI, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Kevin DiGregory and Neil Hammerstrom, and Thomas Reilly, Trial Attorney, the Counterespionage Section of the Criminal Division of the United States Department of Justice.

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